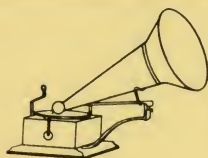


Hillandale



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Gramophone Society

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At the Phonofair: John Stannard, this year's organiser, demonstrates his disc-to-cylinder recording device to an appreciative audience.

(Photo: A.J.George)



Phonofair Prizwinners: A.D.Besford (phonograph) and W.Clark (gramophone), receiving their trophies from the President, George Frow.

(Photos: A.J.George



Official Journal of the City of London Phonograph & Gramophone Society
(founded 1919)

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Edchat

There was a time, rumoured to have been in the not so very distant past, when the Editor had a new excuse for the lateness of the magazine -- he was short of articles. Every cloud has a silver lining, they say, and sure enough, the Editor has now been robbed of that convenient excuse with a vengeance, and has now to apologise not for the magazine's being late (well, it may be, but you should be used to that by now), but for having to keep so many articles over for future issues. This may be unimportant to the reader, but those who have taken the trouble to send in contributions must be disappointed at not finding themselves in print - yet. To them I can only say Thank You and Sorry. Normally there are twenty pages of text in each issue, or twenty-one if you count the standing orders that have hitherto filled the back cover. This time, there are twenty-four, including the contents of that back-page, now re-distributed and shortened by devious means.

The main criterion in deciding what to put in and what to leave out is topicality: letters or articles which refer to previous issues, for example, since the continuity is lost if they are delayed. Meeting reports want to go in as soon as they are received: apropos of which, anyone wondering why the September meeting is not reported in the present issue, even though the A.G.M. of September 29th is, may like to know that I am proposing to serialise at length Peter Martland's account of the life of John McCormack. As seven pages are already given to a similar serialisation of Frank Andrews' talk in July (which seems more urgent than September, if you see what I mean), there simply wasn't room, and John McC. must wait until his Centenary Year is over. Pity, but there it is. If I were one of those well-organised people who plan things before they start and in good time, I would have foreseen this early enough to produce a Bumper Christmas issue with lots of extra pages; but I am not, and did not, and such an expansion at the last minute would have meant that in all probability, the December 1984 Hillandale would have appeared some time in 1985.

It's funny how things arise out of chance happenings. The other day, on my way down the street to buy a new pair of shoes, I met an old school friend, who told me of a recently published autobiography of Jon Pertwee (known to older members, perhaps, from the Navy Lark and to younger ones from Dr. Who or even Worzel Gummidge). J.P. had attended the same prep. school as myself (though many years apart), and his recollections of life there in the early 1930s include having made a record for Regal Zonophone of *Hear My Prayer/Oh for the Wings of a Dove* accompanied by the school choir. Whether the recording was ever published is unclear, and Pertwee's reference to the famous version by Ernest 'Lush' makes me wonder how accurately he remembers the recording company, but if any member has a Regal Zonophone of this work, by J.P. and the Wellington House School chapel choir, looking for a home, I can promise to give it one.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

This year the Society's annual phonofair was organised by John Stannard at the Mechanical Music Museum at Cotton near Stowmarket. Located down a narrow country lane, in pleasant surroundings, the building stands alone with plenty of room to park cars and for children to play while their elders inspect the collection. Although the Museum could be considered perhaps a little too far off the beaten track for many members there was a reasonably good attendance from other regions including visitors from the Netherlands. And it was a very appropriate venue! Imagine a veritable Aladdin's cave, full of mechanical treasures where the timbers of the high roof are adorned with hundreds of gramophone records while nestling on every horizontal beam are many horn gramophones. In fact wherever you look above there is some tantalising goodie to be seen.

Underneath are the organs - some with their pipes reaching to the rafters. There are fairground organs emblazoned with the names of famous makers, reed organs, player organs, a theatre organ and a gigantic cafe organ. Next in size are the street pianos and pianolas but smaller instruments are in abundance too. There are musical boxes, polyphons and organettes which can charm the listener with their bright cheerful music and lurking in the corners are the unusual - a musical Christmas tree, a musical chair and lots more. And of course there are the phonographs although there did seem to be preponderance of Edison Gems! The owner of the Museum, Mr Finbow, gave members a demonstration of many of the major exhibits. The large organs gave a fascinating if thunderous performance!

To cater for the Phonofair, tables were placed in the centre of the main exhibition hall for a bit of swapping and trading and for machines entered for the Concours d'Elegance competition. One most unusual entry was a dual purpose machine capable of playing both cylinders and discs - but not at the same time! Parts of the (upper) mechanism for playing discs were missing when found and new parts had been fitted in what the owner hoped was a likely re-construction of the original design. Unfortunately he has no pattern or picture to go on and there was no manufacturers name or mark to be seen. Perhaps a photograph may ultimately appear in the Hill and Dale to enable some aficionado to identify it.

The competition was conducted by a sealed ballot in a democratic way - no political comments please! - and the prize for the best gramophone went to W Clark for a beautifully restored HMV with a wooden horn. The phonograph prize was won by Tony Besford for a super Triumph fitted with a black Cygnet horn and an O reproducer.

Dave Roberts and Len Watts were again operating the Society Bookshop and noteworthy among the "sideshows" was John Stannards demonstration of recording on wax cylinders. He seems to have perfected a technique of connecting the outlet of horn gramophone tone arm via a rubber tube to the recorder of a phonograph - in this case a Standard - and obtaining some very acceptable recordings. All that he needs is a "gold moulding" process and he could go into business!

An interesting and satisfying day was had by all who attended and thanks are due to John for organising it. Bearing in mind that there is no Norfolk Branch, the amount of mental and physical effort put in by John and Mr and Mrs Finbow must have been prodigious and such is warmly acknowledged and appreciated.

Reviews

PHOENIX 2-minute black wax cylinder No. 2 *Tickle Me Timothy*, by Billy Williams. Obtainable from Miller-Morris & Co., [REDACTED] Devon, England. Price £4, including p.& p.

It is not often that a new cylinder appears on the desk of a reviewer, but in this venture by two Society members the results are really excellent and the record finished and packaged to a high professional in authentic-looking lined boxes. The Man in the Velvet Suit sounds as Bright as a Button, in good voice for showing off a phonograph. This is the second in a series of cylinders put out by Miller-Morris -- No. 1 was *The Laughing Coon* by George W. Johnson -- and the recording is derived from a perfect original. Any phonograph owner whose machine is listless and his cylinders fatigued or off-colour will find the Miller-Morris re-creations as good a tonic as could be wished for. We await further titles in the series.

G.L.Frow

THE GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDED SOUND, by Robert and Celia Dearling, with Brian Rust. Published by Guinness Books and obtainable through the Society Book-list [REDACTED] Price £11 post paid. 225p., fully illustrated in black & white and colour.

When this book came for review, I must confess that I thought of all the others on the History of the Talking Machine that have gone before, from Hughbanks and Lindsay Buick through Gelatt, Read and Welch, Chew, Cain and others, all excellent in their individual ways and in their own times and offering about all of the historical background known at the time of publication. Also there were the autobiographies of Fred Gaisberg, Joe Batten and others who touched on the subject.

And so it was admittedly, on the first hearing of it, a case of saying "What, another one!" The new book is however a determined effort to put another slant on the history of recording and particularly the records, whatever their shape or type. It is divided into nine sections, from "Before Edison" to Long Playing and Compact Disc material, and is really a string of facts -- superlatives in heavy type -- with a great deal of useful information in between. It wends its way from attempts to make gadgets that gave forth speech, through Edison and Berliner and the others to the coming of the great companies, their divisions and fragmentation to the present wobbling set-up of so much of the trade.

Once started it is a difficult book to put down, one so crammed full of facts about the hobby and impossible to absorb at one reading; it is an essential vademecum for anyone giving a talk involving older recordings. The first ..., the earliest known ..., the largest, the smallest, they're all there as might be expected from the Guinness series, together with page histories of the companies and portrait accounts of star recording artists and teams. There are generous illustrations in monochrome, and colour reproductions of labels and literature, and whereas a few of the photographs just have to appear in every such history, some effort has been made to show as much as possible, one or two almost in desperation.

With so many facts there are bound to be a number of errors and omissions that should be put right in a future edition. Even so, this book will appeal to all collectors of

whatever period, and it will give them hours of pleasure. The fact that so few books seem to have been consulted in its compilation suggests that the memory and experience of Brian Rust have played a larger part than he is credited with. It is by no means a book to end all histories of the talking machines, but it will be a permanent reference work.
G.L.F.

DOWN MEMORY LANE: Cavan O'Connor with the Avonmore Trio
(President PRX 25)

Before putting this long-playing record on his turntable your reviewer searched among his shellac discs for something by Cavan O'Connor upon which to base a comparison. He searched in vain for any records bearing the name (although many were so issued), but did find a 1928 Imperial (No. 1917) by 'Pat O'Dell', coupling 'Ramona' with 'After my Laughter Came Tears'. Also was a slightly later Broadcast Twelve (No. 5191) complete with the familiar Broadcast 'approaching-the-centre' whistle, featuring two items from Lehar's Frederica - 'Oh Maiden, My Maiden' and 'Wayside Rose', performed by the tenor 'Terence O'Brien'.

Many, if not most, readers will be aware that the above two names were among the well over a dozen pseudonyms used by Cavan O'Connor for contractual reasons when recording. Several other singers did the same kind of thing, two that spring to mind being Peter Dawson and Frank Titterton.

Mr. O'Connor, who studied at the Royal College of Music in London, made his first recordings in the mid nineteen-twenties, at about the time when the microphone of the electrical system was taking over from the horn of the acoustic process, and during a long and successful career recorded ballads, operatic arias and musical comedy numbers for many different companies. He also provided numerous 'vocals' for practically all the famous dance bands in the late twenties and thirties, this also on a wide variety of labels. A top performer on the variety theatre stage for some forty years, he also appeared in films. Wounded as an under-age soldier in France during the first World War, his radio work during the second earned him countless admirers.

This new record, which is in stereo although undeclared as such, presents a collection of fourteen ballads, some perhaps more familiar than others, and including two traditional Irish songs.

This is a remarkable record, for it was made as the singer was approaching his eighty-fifth birthday earlier this year. The comparison with the earlier records represents an interval of well over fifty years, yet here is the unmistakably the same voice, which time has treated kindly. Your reviewer's opinion is that there is, not surprisingly, no longer the same vocal power or ability to cope with the upper range of notes, but the phrasing and breath control, and the musicianly interpretation of each song remind us that here is a fine singer who, after so many years, has retained his mastery of the vocal art.

As for the songs, your reviewer particularly liked the three Irish items: 'She Moved through the Fair', 'Old Turf Fire' and 'Eileen Oge'. Among the noteworthy others were 'Fleur d'Amour', 'Sunshine of Paradise Alley' and the song in tango rhythm 'My Prayer'. Incidentally, one of the ballads, 'Daybreak', has long been in this reviewer's collection as 'Sweetheart, I'm Dreaming of You' by Jack Hylton and his orchestra on B 5473, and brought a smile of recognition.

Accompanied by the Avonmore Trio of accordion, piano and guitar, Cavan O'Connor ends his selection with his famous signature tune 'Goodnight' which, by the way, is not Irish but from the 1921 operetta 'The Cousin from Nowhere' by the German composer Edward Kuenneke.

Goodnight, then, to Mr. O'Connor, but let it not be Goodbye for a long time yet.

K.W.L.

HISTORIC MASTERS

Happily, Cavan O'Connor is still with us and making fresh recordings, but for followers of singers of the early '78' era all is not lost. Historic Masters Ltd. announce a new edition of 500 pressings of five 78 rpm records, pressed on vinyl, from the EMI Archives. Five of the ten sides were never published in shellac form. The records are:

- HMB 21: TITO SCHIPA: Che Gelida Manina/Ah, Fuyez Douce Image.
- HMB 22: SELMA KURZ: Air and Variations (Les Diamants de la Couronne)/Tu che la Vanita.
- HMB 23: LUISA TETRAZZINI: Jewel Song/ Cruda Sventura.
- HMB 24: ANTONINA NEZHDANOVA: Una Voce Poco fa/ I do not Grieve.
- HMB 25: LEV. SIBIRIAKOV: Si la Rigueur/Cease your Grumbling.

The price of the five records (which cannot be ordered separately) is £25 worldwide (or \$38 in the U.S. and Dollar area). Delivery is expected in late January or early February

Cheques, Postal Orders etc. should be made out to HISTORIC MASTERS LTD. and sent to them at:

Historic Masters Ltd.
C/O Rubini Records

Sussex
England

We understand that a further issue is planned, to follow about six months later, and the EMI Archives are being searched for suitable masters. Deterioration of the originals is a serious problem, and it is said that only about 50% of metals received from EMI are likely to produce successful pressings.

On the subject of archives, the NATIONAL SOUND ARCHIVE (part of the British Library, and previously known as the British Institute of Recorded Sound) aims to establish a National Directory of Recorded Sound Collections. The object of this is to increase public awareness of, and access to, recorded sound collections, particularly those containing material not available commercially. Any one who possesses any such recorded material, or knows of the existence of some, is asked to contact Jeremy Silver, Research Officer, The British Library National Sound Archive, [REDACTED] London SW7 2AS [REDACTED]

Following the sackcloth and ashes theme of the last issue we continue with the delayed reports of the East Fife branch where there have been no less than seven meetings since April. Five took place at the Castlehill Centre and two at the home of Chris Hamilton. In the main the meetings have featured a particular make of record and the April one concentrated on Beltona when Douglas Lorimer gave a very detailed and interesting history of the Company including the various changes in the design of the label. Briefly the records originated as Vocalian and were in production until the beginning of electrical recording in the 1920s. when the Company was ultimately absorbed by Decca.

At the next meeting, Chris Hamilton and Douglas Lorimer gave a run down on the history of Dominion records which were sold by Marks and Spencer for 1/6. The label motif was a globe surrounded by a Saturn ring. Most of catalogue seems to be jazz or light music, but a smaller selection of classical recordings were issued later. The quality was generally considered to be good but the records were only issued between 1928 and 1930 when the Company went bankrupt.

The first of two meetings at Chris Hamilton's home started with some of the recordings made on Decca and Beltona by Tommy Lorne - a first rate Scottish comedian in the 1930s. Apparently a hilarious time was had by all and some thought he was funnier than the great Harry Lauder. Two other comedians were featured, namely Pete Low and Mungo Stuart on Broadcast Super 12 Scottish series. The records are hard to find and Chris went to a great deal of trouble to locate them.

Another meeting was devoted to five and seven inch records from the 1880s to the early 1900s. Made by Berliner and Zonophone (nearly all single sided) they produced a strong "Olde Worlde" atmosphere, bringing back artists who sang and played so far away in the past. Berliner took out his first patent in May 1887 making his first commercial record in 1895 when he sang the old nursery rhyme "Old Mother Hubbard". An example of this very same recording was played and, while muffled, was still distinguishable although an electrical reproducer had to be used to bring it out. As these early records were of short duration, the meeting heard a large number of items dating between 1898 and 1903 when Zonophone first appeared. There was one dated 18 Aug. 1898 made by the Hotel Cecil Orchestra and another dated 1 Jun 1899 of the Trocadero orchestra playing the Overture to Cavaliero Rusticana. Verdict: really amazing!

The July meeting concentrated on Homophone and Homochord records again provided by Chris Hamilton and Douglas Lorimer. These discs originated in Germany under the Homochord label before World War One. During and after the war, discs were produced in the UK under the name of Homophone and for a brief period a series of fine groove records, known as "4 in 1" and playing twice as long as the conventional 10 inch record, were available. The quality of reproduction is considered to be excellent if played electrically but the performance is not good if played with steel needles which are too large for the grooves. The label is readily distinguishable, being blue with a gold motif and title and with a strobe printed around the edge. Like so many, the makers of Homophone were eventually gobbled up by the giant Decca.

September's programme consisted of a series of test and sampler records (ie not for sale) which were used in music shops to demonstrate the wide selection of material on offer. Many records of this type, HMV for example, had special yellow or white labels and featured extracts from the performances of various artists, each being preceded by a dubbing extolling the virtues of the maker's

products. Some carried spoken advertisements for the special qualities of a particular make or examples of the reproduction of different instruments, orchestras or singers. Others, marked not for sale, were used as test discs pending clearance for release. Some of these carried only a completely blank "thread" on the reverse side the purpose of which can only be speculative. When the test pieces were no longer of use to the manufacturer, they were sold off for dealers to dispose of at sales and auctions. Other novelties on show were brown plastic discs which used to be found on greeting cards or as advertisements on food packets.

The other main feature of East Fife meetings relates to the comparison of the various machines and sound boxes used to play the selection of records. The machines are mostly, but not exclusively, portables as they are easily transportable to the Centre and as far as East Fife is concerned, in that class the HMV is considered supreme. In the search for that elusive perfect sound, sound boxes are critically compared, often with those specially tuned and adjusted by Jim Goodall so that a pecking order of excellence is established which is more often than not headed by the HMV 5B!

This theme was continued at the latest meeting held at Chris Hamilton's home where five acoustic machines were compared. The chosen examples were an "Expert", a Diamond Disc, an Amberola 75, a Pathe and an Aeolian Vocalian Graduola Table grand. Not surprisingly, the "Expert" gave a good account of itself while the bass of the Amberola was said to be "thin". The Aeolian was considered to have a clear and balanced tone possibly due to its large mica sound box. This machine features a valve in the throat of the horn operated by a large cable release (similar to that of a camera) to control the volume. After a few bars of the first record, it grunted and stopped. Examination showed that the cable had fouled the governor. That's the trouble with sophisticated machinery - you don't get that trouble with a sock!

In common with other Branches, reports from Hereford have been a little sparse but the programme has been just as full. There have get togethers at Laurie Wilson's home where a general natter takes place interleaved by a little varied music followed by very acceptable refreshments provided by Mrs. W. In August there was a sort of garden party at Mike Field's home; the weather was kind and members attending included quite a few from the Midlands Branch who were very welcome. Jean Field and Ann Sandell aided by Mrs. Wilson provided a fine spread and it was said a good afternoon was had by all.

In October, the Hereford Branch acquired a new name and a new permanent venue - the Foley Arms at Tarrington (halfway between Hereford and Ledbury). At the first meeting there, Laurie Wilson the new Secretary, presided over a mini-AGM where it was decided to change the name. It was felt that "Hereford Branch" implied a very local membership and the name "Severn Vale" was adopted to reflect its fairly far flung membership and to encourage new members or even dormant ones. After all that persiflage (a well known member) Richard Taylor presented a programme of jazz issued by Companies not readily identified with such music, for example Crown. Jazz collectors do not often browse through records bearing such labels and the theme of Richard's talk was to show that such indifference could be a mistake. I don't expect I can show my face in East Fife but I must whisper - some of the records were played on an HMV portable!

August Meeting

AUGUST 11th. 1984

The venue for this meeting was Neasden Library (our Bloomsbury room being unavailable in August), and our thanks go to Frank Andrews for arranging this and to his wife Win for the catering arrangements.

The programme was presented by the President, George Frow, who brought along his Idelia phonograph and used it to play Blue Amberols (and one Indestructible). There was a printed programme giving details of the records, artists, writers and composers, which added considerably to the interest. Photographs of the meeting were taken by Frans Jansen from Holland, a long-standing Member.

The recital consisted of a few orchestral pieces, such as Boys of the Old Brigade (with Peter Dawson singing) and Gems of England (well-known traditional tunes). There were a few instrumental pieces by, for example, Alexander Prince playing Forgotten Melodies, and Charles Daab on bells. The bulk of the programme was taken up by old favourites such as Bay of Biscay (Philip Ritte), Old Rustic Bridge by the Mill (Peter Dawson), Bedouin Love Song (David Brazell), Muleteer of Malaga (Tom Kinniburgh), and other songs by Marie Narelle, T. Foster Why, Byron G. Harlan, Albert Wiederhold and Marie Kaiser.

As always, President's Night proved to be very enjoyable, and it is good to see a phonograph in such fine condition and to hear a programme presented by an enthusiast, with so much background information on the recordings and the personnel behind them. Many thanks, George, and we look forward to many more such presentations.

Operatic Sidelines

The practice of using famous people, especially those from the world of music, to enhance the sales of commercial products is not a recent development. I am thinking of two of today's great singers in particular: Placido Domingo and Kiri Te Kanawa, whose images appear in glossy magazines espousing the merits of Rolex watches, and of the conductor Andre Previn, who regularly appears on the television screen exhorting us to buy a certain make of television.

In the last century the idol of the masses, Jenny Lind, became a household name. Her portrait appeared on chocolate boxes, matchboxes, handkerchiefs and on all manner of commemorative china. I can even remember being sent as a small boy to the local baker to ask for a Jenny Lind loaf. The lasting tribute to this great artist was the day a plaque bearing her name was set up in a corner of Westminster Abbey under the statue of Handel, whose music Jenny Lind so often interpreted. What a pity Edison never had the opportunity to capture the golden trills of the Swedish Nightingale on cylinder!

The great Nellie Melba was not alone in being immortalised in the culinary world.

We know, of course, of Peach Melba and Melba toast, but a more detailed study of the *Repertoire de la Cuisine*, at one time the standard work of reference in all the great kitchens of the world, reveals the names of some of the musical greats who had dishes named in their honour. The eye catches, among others, *Consomme Tosca*, *Ouefs sur le Plat Meyerbeer*, *Filets de Sole Verdi* and *Breval*, *Poularde Adelina Patti*, *Tournado Rossini* and *Coupes Emma Calve*, *Selma Kurtz*, *Edna May* and *Pear Mary Garden*.

One cautionary tale of commercial exploitation of a famous name is that of Mary Garden and the perfume Gardenia. She was asked to sign a piece of paper just as she was about to set sail from New York for France. On her return to New York she saw her name emblazoned in lights high above Broadway, advertising a new perfume called Gardenia. Upon enquiry, she discovered that the piece of paper she had so innocently signed had been an authorisation to use her name for the purpose of advertising the fragrance. Needless to say the scent was a great success, but Miss Garden lost a fortune as she had failed to consult her lawyer before putting pen to paper!

A happier experience for Miss Garden was when her friend and admirer, the great Oscar Hammerstein, composed the 'Louise' waltz in her honour, in recognition of her triumph in Charpentier's opera of that name.

Among the other operatic personalities who lent their name to a product was the famous Polish tenor, Jean de Reske. From time to time one may be fortunate enough to come across one of the cigarette tins which bear his name. It was a great loss to the collecting world that he refused to allow the issue of the three records he made for Fonotipia. We must therefore content ourselves with the Mapleson cylinders on l.p. Amidst all the surface noise and rumbling on the primitive recording, the great Pole can be heard in snippets from Wagner, Massenet and Meyerbeer. However, a word of warning - don't play this to non-collecting friends as they may begin to doubt your sanity!

Another famous Pole, the renowned Marcella Sembrich, gave her name to a brand of cigars; Marcella. There is a picture on the lid of the box which is, without doubt, the great Diva in the role of Rossina from *The Barber of Seville*. In contrast to De Reske, Sembrich made many excellent commercial recordings, among them the Bettini cylinder which caused quite a stir in the collecting world when it was rediscovered in New Zealand some years ago. Happily this recording of the *Voices of Spring* has been transferred to e.p. for all to enjoy.

One might imagine that the many mementoes and souvenirs produced in the hey-day of opera would have disappeared entirely by now, but collectors may well find it worthwhile to keep an eye open for such items. Indeed one may be fortunate enough to enjoy the good luck I had some years ago when on a stroll through Club Row, I came across a Marcella cigar box. It was full of junk and the dealer was not anxious to empty it but, after a good deal of persuasion, I was able to purchase this treasure, and it is now prominently displayed amid my collection of operatic ephemera, where it serves as a container for my operatic postcards.

I remain hopeful of one day adding to this collection and wish good fortune to anyone who derives similar pleasure from the acquisition of these intriguing mementoes of the great stars of opera.

F. Traynor.

EDISON BELL RECORDS.

NEW ISSUE—NEW PROCESS.

ONE SHILLING

Our first parcel will be forwarded to

OUR UP-TO-DATE DEALERS

about the middle of May and **CONSIST OF**

20000 Village Blacksmith, Part 1.

20001 " " " 2.

By Mr. PETER DAWSON and Orchestra.

Mr. Dawson renders this fine song with feeling and dignity. Although recorded in two parts each is interesting in itself. No. 1 has a splendid anvil effect, and in No. 2 a special feature is the organ accompaniment.

20002 Splash Me.

By Miss D. WHITTAKER and Orchestra

Sung very daintily with taste and point.

20003 The Clock and the Cradle.

By the BOHEMIAN BAND.

A domestic lullaby illustrating the clock ticking and the cradle rocking.

20008 Vampire March (Xylophone Solo).

By Mr. DUDLEY ROY and Orchestra.

One of the best Xylophone solos we have issued. It is lively and spirited from beginning to end.

20009 Dainty Daisy Dimple (Bell Solo).

By Mr. LEN WARD and Orchestra.

A charmingly attractive Record, the bells being sweet and mellow, and the composition catchy and piquant.

20011 Rates and Taxes.

Mr. WILL EVANS.

Mr. Will Evans discourses learnedly on the evils of taxation and gives plenty of reasons why one should not pay these unwelcome demands.

20047 Niki March (From "A Waltz Dream.")

By the ROYAL MILITARY BAND.

A huge success from "A Waltz Dream." A special effect is gained by the Piccolo duet introduced, which is a pleasing interlude in this march.

20070 Dan Cupid.

By the ROYAL MILITARY BAND.

An extremely effective intermezzo with a pretty theme as trio with orchestral bells playing the melody.

20072 Ring Down the Curtain.

By Mr. HARRY TREVOR and Orchestra.

An old title re-made with orchestral accompaniment.

20074 Because I look a Fool.

By Mr. BEN LAWES and Orchestra.

The singer is not as green as he is cabbage looking. How he takes in a good feed, and the landlord of the restaurant at the same time is very smart.

20075 Geography.

By Mr. HARRY BLUFF and Orchestra.

A song that combines instruction with amusement.

This marks a great advance in the art of recording sound, and care will be taken that

EVERY RECORD IS EQUAL TO A MASTER RECORD.

Every Dealer should be on our Mailing List. If you do not receive our Circulars—which are of great importance—write at once and they will be regularly sent to you.

These records will be easily distinguished by their newly designed box, and will be known hereafter as the

NEW N.P. RECORDS.

EDISON BELL—ALWAYS FIRST—ALWAYS UP-TO-DATE.

FIRST IN 1890. — FIRST TO-DAY.

May, 1908.

39, CHARING CROSS ROAD, LONDON.

May 1908; and Edison Bell had new cylinders to announce, alongside the new disc.

GENUINE Edison Bell Records.

by Frank Andrews

The study of the history of Edison Bell disc records in the United Kingdom which follows here and in subsequent issues formed the basis of the author's talk at the Society meeting at Bloomsbury on July 17th, where it was accompanied by records and slides, presented with the assistance of Len Watts.

THE BELL DISC

The Edison Bell Consolidated Phonograph Co. Ltd. advertised that their first disc records would be ready for sale on May 15th 1908. Test pressings had already been heard as early as March, in the offices of The Phono Trader. The company referred to its new discs as Discaphone Records, although they never used that style on the labels. However, the name 'Discaphone' did appear on the very similarly-designed needle tins.

The Bell discs were of 10½ inches diameter, were double sided and sold for 2s.6d. The first artists were some of those then being issued on cylinder records and their popularity assisted in the promotion of the new discs against the existing competition. This comprised at least seventeen other labels, from Beka Grand to Zonophone.

The Gramophone Co. soon found reason to object to the Bell disc: they observed that it was being made with surrounding lips at the outer edge, which was an infringement of their Birnbaum patent No. 22413. Edison Bell were rapidly informed of this fact, and apologised in July 1908, undertaking not to press any future issues with the offending lip. Examples of these discs are known which have the lip on one face only.

The Gramophone Company itself had already decided to issue its first double-sided discs here, and through its British Zonophone Company had established the Twin Record Company. This company released its first Twin Double Sided Disc Records some two months after the appearance of the Bell Discs at the same price.

The Bell Disc catalogue series began at No. 1 and the matrix series at 2000. The records had been on sale for just over two months when Edison Bell announced it was to introduce the Phonadisc in September. This was an 8½-inch double-sided vertical cut disc, which should have appeared in mid-August. It was to sell at 1s.6d. and was to be accompanied by a larger disc, also vertical cut, to be called the Marvel, and variously said to be 11 or 12 inches in size. It was to sell at 4s. In the event the Phonadisc was the only other disc to be made and sold by the Edison Bell Consolidated company. Its expected release was delayed until November 1908, with sixteen discs in the initial list. Six dozen other titles were in reserve for later issue. These were the ninth type of vertical cut disc to reach the British public; Columbia's children's wax discs, the Stollwerck records and three types of Neophones had come and gone, while still available were the new Clarion discs of October and the two-year-old Pathe discs.

The Phonadiscs started at catalogue No. 250, with a matrix series in the 4,000 range. With only two additional supplements, No. 312 was the highest number known to be issued. The Phonadisc centres were unique in that they carried both a paper label and an inscribed area which had a white filling. Both sides of a known disc are announced.

AUGUST, 1908.

DEALERS

LOOK OUT FOR THE

TRIPLETS

—ONE HAS “LANDED” AND BEEN CHRISTENED—

“BELL-DISC”

It is a “Wonder.”

Two Records on One Disc—It takes the Lead.

ECONOMY, EFFICIENCY & COMMON SENSE MUST PREVAIL.

THE OTHER **TWO** ARE COMING.

THE PHONA-DISC, $8\frac{3}{4}$ in. — TWO FULL RECORDS, 1/6

DUE about middle of AUGUST.

THE LAST OF THE TRIO — EXPECTED
IN SEPTEMBER.

This is another **DOUBLE-SIDED “MARVEL,” 11-in. 4/-**

AND DEALERS
DON'T HURRY — WAIT and WATCH.

EDISON BELL

Has Something to say to you, to your advantage, so Wait for their full Programme—
all in good time.

EDISON BELL, 39, Charing Cross Road, LONDON.

The paper label was green printed in gold. The Bell Disc labels were pale blue, black and gold.

The continuing use of Discaphone instead of Gramophone to describe the Bell Disc records was probably in deference to the Gramophone Company, which was then trying to secure the word Gramophone as an exclusive registered trade mark and this would avoid any repetition of the poor relationship which had arisen in 1900 when the Edison Bell Consolidated company of that time had attempted to close down the manufacture of Berliner Gramophone records by a court action claiming infringements of a number of Edison Bell's patents. (The action had been settled out of court with the new Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. paying a sum of money in consideration for the freedom to continue in manufacture during the life of the patents.)

Edison Bell had not been manufacturing its new disc products for very long when the head of its Experimental Disc Department, G.W.Ogden, died. His position was filled by Thomas Hough, one of the sons of the General Manager. The recording rooms at that time were in Euston Buildings, at George Street, Euston Square. The main stockrooms and dispatch centre were also there.

Soon after the introduction of the Phonadiscs, Edison Bell informed its retailers and factors that it was closing its Charing Cross Road headquarters and that all its future business was to be undertaken from Euston Buildings where extra floor space was to be brought into use as the makers of the White Gold Moulded record, the General Phonograph Co. Ltd., had vacated its portion of the Buildings. This move and the closure of its Manchester Branch in December 1908 supports James Hough's report to his Board that the viability of the business was not as secure as one could wish and that the business could not continue much longer due to the large amount of monies being paid as interest to its debenture holders. A fire which destroyed the cylinder record making department at the works that same December manifestly increased the company's difficulties.

The last new releases of Edison Bell Discs, Phonadiscs and New Process cylinders, from the Edison Bell Consolidated Phonograph Co. Ltd. took place in January 1909 for, as James Hough announced, the company, along with Edisonia Ltd., had been put into the hands of a Receiver and Manager, although neither company was in liquidation as a reconstruction of the business was to be attempted.

Such a state of affairs was of short duration for, on the advice of its Bankers, the Consolidated company resolved to sell off Edisonia Ltd. as a going concern. Edisonia was accordingly put up for auction on March 24th 1909. No new recordings had been issued since the last of the 60 Phonadiscs and the 150 Bell Discs in January.

J.E. HOUGH LTD: THE FOURTH EDISON BELL COMPANY

Edisonia Ltd., valued at £50,000, was knocked down to James E. Hough for £10,400. He later purchased the assets and goodwill of the Consolidated company, its recording and stock rooms, 10,000 cylinders and 1,500 discs. With these acquisitions Mr. Hough founded J.E.Hough Ltd. in April. It was capitalised at £20,000, to carry on the Edison Bell business. Hough was its Managing Director; Dr. C.R.Maynard Owen was the only Board member from the former company. The registered office was at Glengall Road, Peckham, where the former Edisonia Works were being rebuilt in concrete and steel to safeguard against the hazard of future fires. Manufacture was not expected to restart until early May when, it was hoped, twelve cylinder titles per month would be put on sale.

In May, J.E.Hough Ltd. purchased the plant and master moulds of the new firm of Russell Hunting & Co., which had recently purchased the Sterling Records business. New showrooms and recording rooms were also opened at 51 City Road E.C. at about this time. Thus in June 1909, J.E.Hough Ltd. began advertising a continuation of the Edison Bell cylinder records for sale in July, along with some Sterlings made from the acquired moulds, when the resumption of Bell Disc and Phonadisc manufacture was announced.

Former and newly recorded Bell discs went on sale in August 1909. The catalogue and matrix numbering continued, and the former label design was kept although two minor variants are known. The Phonadiscs, if sold, appear not to have had any augmentation of the catalogue.

There had been changes in the disc competition during the previous twelve months; Jumbo Records and Rena Double Face Records were two of the more formidable newcomers. The Renas were a contract label made from Columbia masters: the contracted label was a comparatively new feature of the industry during the 1908-9 season, and J.E.Hough Ltd. were quick to secure a foothold in this business. One of its first contractors was a Mr. Mills, who had establishments in Bishopsgate and at Walthamstow (sometimes trading as the Bancroftian Co.). Mills had already had a Millophone Record pressed by others in 1908, but by November 1909 he was selling the Millophone New Record, pressed from Bell Disc masters at the Edison Bell works.

Two other contracted labels, or 'stencilled records', as they were known in the trade, made for unknown proprietors during this season were the Premier Record, depicting the god Pan, and the Standard Record - Royal Standard, with a self-evident label design, both from Bell Disc masters.

With little business left to it, the Edison Bell Consolidated Phonograph Co. Ltd. had found it impossible to carry on its affairs and from its office with that of its Receiver it resolved on December 12th 1909 to wind up voluntarily. It held its final meeting in May 1910.

By this time J.E.Hough Ltd. had established four provincial branches. The Works Manager was a Mr. Robbins and the recording department was under the control of Mr. Hesse, a composer, orchestral conductor and pianist. The chief commercial traveller was Vic Willis, who had been with Hough since his London Phonograph Co. days in 1893-6.

A new product was advertised in May 1910. This was the Eureka Home Disk Recording outfit which, when attached to a gramophone would record vertically on wax discs. The claim was made that up to one hundred replays were possible or, alternatively, the cut wax could be sent to the works for processing so that ordinary pressings could be made.

In June 1910, Mr. Justice Parker ruled that the Gramophone Co. Ltd. would not be allowed to register 'Gramophone' as its trade-mark. Consequent upon this judgement, the Bell Disc took on a new green and gold label incorporating the word 'Gramophone' in its name style. At least one variant is known with this label. By July 1910 the Bell Discs were said to be made of a new and more durable composition.

Two new types of disc record, with playing times of 2½ and 4 minutes respectively, were promised for the 1910-11 season beginning in the Autumn, and with six new presses installed one of the new lines was advertised in September 1910 as EDISON BELL NEW

PROCESS VELVET FACE GRAMOPHONE RECORD.

This disc was, supposedly, to hold 20% more music than the Bell Disc although still of only 10½ inches. The finer cut Velvet Faces, with red and gold labels, were not put on sale until November when twenty-four discs were released at 3s.0d. The company had not only doubled its machinery to accommodate the extra work involved but was then in the process of doubling it again. Pressure of work had delayed the appearance of the Velvet Face as it was still delaying the 2½-minute disc.

THE LITTLE CHAMPION RECORD

The 9-inch, 2½-minute vertically cut discs, the Little Champions, were eventually put on sale in December priced at 1s.3d. Playing almost as long as a 10-inch disc, they were made of a new, hard and unbreakable composition called Vitaroid and given black and gold labels. They were numbered within a 3,000 catalogue series and the matrices, like the earlier Phonadiscs, were within a 4,000 range. The last new releases of Little Champions were in March 1911, although the discs continued to be advertised for some months afterwards.

Contract work had continued during 1910 and new work entailed the production of Britannic Records, National Record, and National Double Sided Records (for unknown proprietors). Apollo records were made for Constantin Craes & Co. of London. A customer turned down was the English Record Co. Ltd., whose John Bull records were odious to the talking machine trade. J.E.Hough Ltd. was taken to court when it refused to press John Bull records which had been ordered through a third party. The company stated that it was willing to fulfil the order, but not with that label.

A new type of disc was announced in April 1911 when the company stated it was to produce a finely cut disc which could be played equally well with a needle or a sapphire stylus, as used for vertical cut discs. A fine cut record was demonstrated to a representative of the Phono Trader in May, but no such record was ever sold by J.E.Hough Ltd.*

VELVET FACE CELEBRITY RECORD

An innovation in the Velvet Face records appeared in June 1911 when four sides recorded by Madame Jomelli of the Metropolitan Opera, New York, were issued in single-sided form and labelled Velvet Face Celebrity Record. A few double-sided Velvet Faces recorded by Senor Bocardi also carried the violet and gold celebrity label. All were numbered within the standard series and cost the same. Velvet Faces were numbered in a 1,000 catalogue series and shared the same matrix series as the Bell Discs, which had reached the 2,400 mark when the V.F.s were introduced.

New stockrooms and showrooms were opened in Cranbourn Street, W.C., in July 1911, the musical director for the company having his offices in the same premises. New recording rooms at the works, built mainly of concrete, were complete by November 1911.

New contract work work during 1911, pressed from the 10-inch masters, included

* However, there was some connection with Percy J. Packman, who after the failure of his Musogram Records, had developed such a record which was subsequently put on sale, in a modified form, as the Marathon Record through his National Gramophone Co. Ltd. This was founded in June 1911. James Hough had shares in that company and it could be that the Edison Bell works did the pressing: marks on Marathon stampers denoting takes are similar to those found on Edison Bell matrices, but as these were the marks used by C.R.Johnson, ex-Edison Bell, an associate of Packman, this may not be so.

the Diploma Record for J.Blum & Co. of London and Exo Records for Moorhouse Ltd. of Padiham, Lancs, and from the Velvet Face matrices Mr. Mills had a new label in Millophone New Celebrity Records.

THE WINNER

An announcement of December 1911 revealed that a syndicate had been formed to produce The Winner, a record which was "To combat the ill-made foreign records then flooding the market". Arrangements had already been made for the production of the Winners with the best all-British manufacturer - an oblique reference to J.E.Hough Ltd.

The Winners, it was advised in January 1912, would be put on sale on February 1st, at 2s.6d., the standard price for most 10-inch double-sided records at the time. The selling company was The Winner Record Company, which had an address in Willowbrook Grove, Peckham - this, in fact, was a side entrance of the Edison Bell works in Glengall Road.

The first list of The Winners comprised fifty-five discs, and all were 'stencilled' records in that they were pressed from J.E.Hough Ltd.'s matrices in the 2,000 series, but for the Winners the metals were given a new stock matrix, numbered 1 onwards, to keep the metals apart in the factory. Although priced at 2s.6d., there is little doubt that these 'new' records were sold more cheaply by dealers.

On April 10th 1912, The Winner Record Co. Ltd. was registered with a nominal capital of £100. This company took over the selling of the Winner records, which had a black and gold label carrying, in its upper half, a scene of a horse race at a winning post. This company's files were destroyed years ago on orders from the Denning Committee and it has not been possible to discover who actually comprised the Winner Syndicate, the Winner Record Company or the Limited Company, but there is little doubt that J.E.Hough Ltd., if not wholly owning the company at first must, nevertheless, have had a substantial holding: four of its directors were later known to be on the Winner Company's board. Although the advertising matter for the Winners was of a distinctly James E. Hough tenor, no proprietor's name appeared on the labels of the first discs.

In May 1912, J.E.Hough Ltd. advised that it was to bring out a 12-inch disc. This decision was arrived at, so it was claimed, by reason of the the first copyright law to affect records which was to come into effect on July 1st 1912. No explanation was given. With this new law operative there was talk of increasing the price of the Velvet Faces by 1d. to pay for the Royalty stamps but this was not put into effect and the price remained stable for both the Edison Bell labels. The Winner is known to have been down in price to 2s.0d. by August 1912. 118382 had been sold during the first five months of sale. The Winner records of this time should rightly be considered as 'contract' records, for not only did they have their own matrix stock, but J.E.Hough Ltd. received proper orders for pressing (one was for 40,000, in September 1912). Perhaps the thinking was that if the Winners failed, only the Winner Record Co. Ltd. would go into liquidation, without affecting J.E.Hough Ltd.

The reduction of the Winners to 2s.0d. by August 1912 was probably in response to the arrival of the Coliseum Record and Scala Record in June 1912, at the low price of 1s.6d. These 10-inch discs were 'stencilled' from matrices owned by Carl Lindstrom A.G. of Germany, many of which had appeared on Beka Grand records. Ten new presses were going into the Peckham works in December 1912 and an additional building was under construction. Letters patent had been applied for for a new process of turning the edges of the metal shells over the backing plates instead of soldering them on.

(To be continued)

TO THE EDITOR

Glasgow, November 9th 1984

Dear Christopher,

I find it interesting to note the favourable response in recent issues to articles relating to the musical side of our hobby, as opposed to the purely mechanical and theoretical aspect.

I attempt to make my contributions to the magazine appealing to a wide range of Society members. This consideration prevented me from sending a piece on the Arnold Bax centenary in 1983. I wasn't sure how many readers would share my interest in this rather neglected composer. It seemed rather self-indulgent.

However, before 1984 closes, we must not forget that the birth of a very prominent artist took place a century ago. I refer to Wilhelm Backhaus. I am sure that many collectors have some of his discs on their shelves, particularly those which he recorded for HMV in the 1930s. Although I do not have sufficient biographical material on this pianist, I feel it would not be correct to overlook the centenary of the birth of an artist whose recording career spanned the years from 1907 until his death in 1969.

Yours sincerely,

John E. Cavanagh.

Catawba, N.C.

Dear Mr. Proudfoot,

Received No. 140 today and have enjoyed reading it and seeing the great close-up of the flip-over Walshaw stylus, which I had no idea existed as well as the Variol combination attachment. I hope someone comes through with an explanation of 'how it works' but I suspect from the looks of it that the door-knob mechanism sticking out behind replaces the half-nut on the Edison and it has some kind of planetary gear which operates on the additional lead-screw that is mounted above this door-knob.

I read the Letters to the Editor and while I realise that the HILLANDALE NEWS is indeed more relative to the collector in England than perhaps overseas, there is much to be found in its pages which will not be seen elsewhere. I am most happy to be among your subscribers and express my appreciation to you and the other members of the Mother country to give of your best to the oldest of all phonographic organisations.

A couple of years ago, Barry Williamson had some comment about Cal Stewart of 'Uncle Josh Weathersby' fame, in regard to his personal records. I replied to this to the Editor, but have not seen any mention of this in our paper. As I recall, Mr. Williamson was wondering about the content of these records. I will enclose a written transcript of one of these. Five of these personal records have surfaced and I have four of them. Sometimes, Stewart used a title from his regular stories into which he would interject the name of the customer - perhaps inviting them to come to Pun'kin Center to visit. Other times, he used entirely different stories which were never recorded commercially. Of the four that I have, three are this unusual type:

1. Uncle Josh and the Phonograph
2. Aunt Nancy Joins the Maccabees
3. Uncle Josh and the Real Estate Agent

The other one is of a common title, as is the fifth, owned by a collector in Connecticut:

4. Uncle at a Game of Ball
5. Uncle Josh and Aunt Nancy's Visit to New York

As for the picture of Peter Dawson, it is interesting and it could pass for a cartoon of our own Bob Hope, but I have not the slightest idea of who Maty is.

Thanks again for your faithful service and I'll look forward to issue No. 141.
Sincerely Yours

John A. Petty

Transcription of "Uncle Josh Weathersby and the Phonograph"

A personal cylinder made at the Columbia dealer in Kansas City, Mo. USA about 1905

"Uncle Josh Weathersby and the phonograph by Mr. Cal Stewart, made especially for Mr. Art R.Festus (laugh)

Well sir, t'other night I don't s'pose I was ever more sot back in my life than I was when I went down to Art R.Festus' house. Well sir, Art he's got a lotta that phonograph machines and the darn things what they put on 'em, records, I think they call'em - well sir, he's got more of them you could shake a stick at, he's a sorta crank on the subject, I guess. Well, I went down to Art's house and he brought out a darn machine and put a little cannon on the end of it and started to going - by gosh, I like ta jumped clear outa my boots (laugh). Well sir, that darn thing just done everything. I remember one feller come outen the machine and sung a little song, sumpen about waltzing around agin. Near as I can remember it went sumpen like this.

Hiram J.Crawley and his gal, Samantha
Went down to the Pike County Fair,
And Hiram said, 'Honey, now I've got some money,
We'll take in most everything there.'
Arrived on the ground, many strange things they found
Including a new-fangled swing.
And Hiram said, 'Gee, now here goes you and me.'
And truly Samantha did sing,
'Oh take me around again, Hiram,
Around, around, around.
I love for to ride in that flying machine
Oh many feet over the ground.
That flying machine, it to me is a charm;
I wish that we had one right down on the farm. (Tune is an attempt
Take me around again, Hiram, at 'Waltz me
Around, around, around.' (laugh) Around agin, Willie')

Well sir, that was the doggonest thing. Then t'other feller come out and told a story of sumpen or other: said one time when he was a boy down home, he went down to the river and he went to fishing and he went to fish and fish and fish, till finally he caught a fish and laid it on the bank and while he was fishin' foe another one, darn if that fish didn't get up and walk up and down and say, 'howdy-do' and say first one thing....." (runs of the end of the cylinder).

Tring, Herts.

Dear Christopher,

Re the Peter Dawson cartoon, I do not know the name of the cartoonist, but my reading of the signature is Macy, not Maty. What looks like a stroke of a T is probably only the stroke of the A. Macy could well be the man's real name.

Sincerely,

Michael Walters.

Sheerness, Kent.

Dear Sir,

I have read Lawrence Goodwin's letter (Hillandale No. 140) and I have also re-read his original letter and your comments thereafter (Hillandale No. 138). I must admit that

I am totally bewildered at the strong reaction from Mr. Goodwin, and that bewilderment has not been dispelled by further re-reading of the correspondence.

I am sorry that Mr. Goodwin regards your comments as a 'snide, calculated put-down'. During my time as a member of the Society - albeit a mere three or four years - I have never experienced such treatment from yourself, nor, for that matter, from any other members of the Society.

The Society has many senior members - both in age and years of membership - and without exception they have explained, demonstrated, repaired and advised.... in short, they have lived up to the aims of the organisation. Those are the great British collectors... those who share their knowledge and love of obsolete equipment and recordings and who patiently accept that some of us wouldn't know a Pathé Coq from a PixieGrippa! My own experience of the Society could not be further from the idea of a 'tight little in-group of British collectors', a claim incidentally I find harder than Mr. Goodwin to elicit from your comments.

Perhaps, Mr. Editor, your choice of J.Paul Getty as an example of a great collector, was misinterpreted by Mr. Goodwin, who seems to be ultra-defensive of his fellow countrymen and almost xenophobic in his attitude towards British members of the CLPGS. If such an interpretation has been made, I am sure that you, Mr. Editor, would be the first to clarify your position.

On the question of the Hillandale News - the content of which sparked off the correspondence referred to above - I can only say that I look forward to its arrival every two months...or so! I read it from cover to cover, and although some issues have more to interest me than others, I have kept all my back-copies and they are constantly referred to (thanks to the indices) and are kept clean in the purpose-made Cordex binders.

Mr. Goodwin concludes with the sad observation that his current subscription to Hillandale will be the last ... perhaps in that phrase he sums up the fact that he regards the Society merely as an organisation set up to produce a magazine. I hope I am correct in believing that the CLPGS is an organisation to which one belongs and which should be supported and which, among its other roles, happens to produce an excellent magazine.

Yours faithfully,

Colin Johnson.

The first paragraph of Colin Johnson's letter echoes precisely my own bewilderment at Mr. Goodwin's letter in the October issue. I too read and re-read my comments in June and could find no evidence of a 'put-down', of snide or derisory comments, and as for that 'one statement clear enough' - where was it? Frightened of adding fuel to Mr. Goodwin's fire, I made no comment on his rebuke, but let it stand on its own, free of leading questions from me, hoping that someone would follow it up with, perhaps, some clue as to what I had said that could be so totally misunderstood. Nothing forthcoming so far on those lines, but Mr. Petty's kind letter shows that one U.S. member at least has taken no offence, and this was followed a day later by Mr. Johnson's, which reassuringly indicates that whatever clanger I dropped was as inaudible to another Englishman as it was to me.

As for poor old J.Paul Getty, all I said was that none of us could begin to compare with his greatness as a collector. As possibly the most widely-known collector of recent years, on both sides of the Atlantic, he provided the most obvious example of a truly great collector. I am unclear whether Mr. Goodwin found this offensive to the memory of J.P.G. or to the American nation as a whole, or both, much less why. All I can do is apologise for whatever it was he thought I had said.

- A chastened (and still puzzled) Editor

Liverpool, October 24th 1984

Dear Christopher,

Sorry to be taking up your columns again, but on quite a different subject.

I must draw attention to an error in George Frow's excellent article on the making of records for Purchase Tax purposes onwards. He states that the publication of amounts of purchase tax revealed the amount of retail margin, but this is not so. Purchase Tax was an *ad valorem* tax on wholesale price but in fact only rarely was it applied at the wholesale stage and certainly not in the record industry. Normally Purchase Tax was charged on sale by the manufacturer to the wholesaler with the price uplifted to a hypothetical wholesale figure.

I never had any professional experience of the record industry but have always assumed that, in the period of the EMI/Decca duopoly in the 1940s, distributors were used but not wholesalers. If this is the case it is probable that P.T. was calculated on the basis of the manufacturer's price plus about 20% or even 25%. Some older members may remember the constant complaint of the jewellery lobby that they had to pay 125% when the rate was 100%; most trades were also affected but less vocally.

Purchase Tax was certainly a temporary wartime measure which lasted 32 years but could not begin to match the longevity of the war-tax of 1915 which levied which levied a tax of 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % on gramophones, phonographs and parts thereof and records at importation. The measure introduced by Chancellor of the Exchequer McKenna in the Finance Act 1915 became effective in June 1915. BEing a Liberal, McKenna was clearly loath to introduce a protective import duty so he dressed his measure up as a revenue enactment to help pay for the war. However, good reasons to retain the tax were found in the post-war years, and so on and so on. Not until 1958 did the McKenna Duties disappear from the statute, and even then the heavy rates of import duty survived into the superseding Import Duties Act of 1958.

The McKenna Duties were probably responsible for the near absence of overseas competition in the record industry in the twenties, thirties and forties and even into the fifties.

The outburst of that pompous twit, Compton McKenzie, was typical of this shallow-thinking gent. He was usually wrong and in fairness it must be pointed out that the implementation of P.T. coincided with an amazing recovery in record sales. Especially his beloved classical records, which, with their little green and orange tax labels, now seem to clutter up every junk shop heap I find.

I note that it is reported that as time went on the separation of records tax paid at differing rates became disregarded. My recollection of this period is of the meticulous way in which the retailers I bought from observed the requirements, but then we always were a law-abiding lot up here.

Sincerely

Barry Williamson.

So what's the matter with classical records? - Ed.

St. Andrews, Fife

Dear Christopher,

Dints and Bumps

Mr. Stone's letter on record depressions raises one of those points which everyone

wonders about but which somehow never gets explained - either formally in books or informally amongst collectors.

Since no other view seems to be forthcoming, I may as well wade in with my own understanding of the problem. The only remark I have ever come across which is anything like an explanation is that the hard rubber material "tended to flatten out in spots"; in other words, the depressions occurred in the record material after pressing. Certainly, the later record industry encountered the problem of gas bubbles within the material, but these caused blisters in the surface. (See "Defects in Gramophone Records" by W.D.Owen and H.Courtney Bryson, in 'Gramophones, Acoustic and Radio', published circa 1932, for an account of various record defects.)

My own feeling has always been that the dints were actually pressed into the records, and moreover that the stampers contained these defects. Support for this view comes from the examination of multiple copies of the same record: I once had no fewer than four copies simultaneously of one Berliner record, and was struck by the virtually identical deformations on them; since the later pressings were easily distinguished (one had an Angel back design), it could be seen that the only significant change over about three years of pressing was the acquisition of a few extra depressions.

What would cause the damage in the stampers? The most obvious possibility is of course the occurrence of foreign materials in the record composition during depression. The early European Berliners were made of an extremely nasty compound which included hair as a binder; this makes the surfaces literally hairy compared with the American counterparts (why have the Americans nearly always been so lucky with their record surfaces compared with ourselves?). I have one Berliner which has what looks like a piece of string hanging out of the back - obviously the binder sometimes clumped together: this immediately suggests one possible hazard. No doubt there were other components in the mixture which were likely to appear in hard lumps from time to time.

Another possible occasion for damage could have been in the separation of a metal positive from its negative (after plating). Again, examination of early records shows a number of instances of what look like pleats or folds in the surface, as though some kind of peeling-off had taken place. I have noticed, however, that this seems to occur only after the introduction of the wax process (replacing the old etched-zinc process), and is very common in the later 1900 records.

Suppose that you, as a manufacturer, were faced with dozens of more or less damaged stampers, in the middle of the lucrative mass production of items of no great precision? What would be easier or more natural than a few light taps on the backs of the thin metal matrix parts with a small hammer? And if the damage, or its correction, were a little too severe, there were magnifying glasses and sharp knives! And if that seems a little far-fetched, there are not a few records which have what looks like occasional 're-carving' of the grooves, especially across low bumps... I have one even more unlikely example of the rescue of a 'lost' recording: the original wax has obviously been broken in half, but nothing daunted the technicians have gone ahead and plated the two halves (while held together). The result is what looks and sounds like a broken record, with the crack disappearing underneath the raised embossed lettering!

What I suggest, therefore, is that the dints and bumps were due either to damage or to repair to the matrices - the odd thing is that the little lines of hammer blows persisted for some years in the case of the Gramophone Company's records, whereas there is little sign of the problem in early Zonophone records.

Peter Adamson

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1984

Held at Finbow's Mechanical Music Museum, Cotton, Stowmarket. September 29th 1984 at 3.30p.m.

Apologies for absence were received from Barry Williamson.

MINUTES:

The Minutes of the 1983 Annual General Meeting had appeared in Hillandale News in December 1983. They were taken as read, and their acceptance was proposed by J.Bratley, seconded by T. Besford.

MATTERS ARISING:

There were no matters arising.

CHARIMAN'S REPORT:

The Chairman reported the passing of a successful year with interesting programmes held in London. It had been noted that Ruth Edge's programme on Scott of the Antarctic was the first ever presented to the Society by a woman, but happily such an occasion would be repeated three times in the forthcoming year. The Chairman concluded by announcing his intention not to stand for re-election at the 1985 A.G.M. Adoption of the Chairman's Report was proposed by F. Andrews and seconded by P. Martland.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The Treasurer had distributed copies of the balance sheet before the meeting, with a supplementary sheet showing money transferred from the London bank to his local branch in Malvern. The Deposit Account had been closed. Funds appeared to be very high at present, but were to be used to finance publication of two books which had been in the pipeline for some time.

Subscriptions had brought in over £3800. A black spot for the Treasurer was the tendency of U.S. members to pay in their own currency, which involves the Society in transfer charges on each cheque. The London bank had intended to charge us £80 per quarter for handling these cheques and other moneys. The Malvern bank charges only for the dollar cheques, which cost £3 each. To encourage U.S. members to pay in Sterling, it was proposed that they be asked to pay either £7.50 or \$15.00.

The subscription for all other members would remain unchanged for 1985-6, but the cost of distributing and printing the magazine is likely to exceed the anticipated income from subscriptions and subscription rates were expected to be raised for the following year. Distribution accounted for about 700 magazines of each printing of 900, the remaining 200 being stored at Dave Roberts' address.

AUDITOER'S REPORT:

The Auditor had examined the Accounts and reported that they were true and correct. Acceptance of the Auditor's and Treasurer's Reports was proposed by W.R.Violen, seconded by J.Booth.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

For 1985-6, rates would be as follows:

- £5.00 (U.K., Europe and Surface Mail, all countries)
- £7.50 (all countries outside Europe, AIRMAIL)
- or: \$15.00 (U.S.A., AIRMAIL, Dollar payments only)
- \$11.00 (U.S.A., surface mail, Dollar payments only)

These rates were proposed by E. Cunningham, seconded by P.Martland.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

The only new nomination received was for the vacant post of Secretary. Suzanne Lewis was accordingly elected to this post (proposed by F. Andrews, seconded by T.Massey). The other Officers and Committee members were re-elected (proposed by J.Bratley, seconded by D.Roberts). Mrs. E. Legge was re-elected Auditor (proposed by F.Andrews, seconded by M. Field).

PROGRAMMES:

Programmes for the London Meetings in 1984-5 were agreed as follows:

October 30th	J.Goodall	April 9th	R.Lambert
November 27th	Bring a record	May 28th	Possibly D.Lewis
December 18th	S.Lewis	June 18th	R.Edge
January 29th	L.Watts	July 16th	or
February 26th	E.Cunningham	August (Neasden)	F.Andrews
March 12th	D. Roberts	September	P.Martland.

The AGM and Phonofair would be held in the Midlands in September (subject to confirmation by the Secretary)

A video evening was suggested, which would require someone to co-ordinate suitable tapes.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

The Chairman stated that the books referred in the Treasurer's Report were on Edison History in Europe (title to be finalised) and a complete listing of Columbia disc records. The cost of printing these was not yet known.

A question was asked about the possible setting up of a Society-funded museum, but it was felt that this was not practicable.

John Booth suggested that a Directory be compiled of all machines held by public and privately-owned museums, and it was agreed that this idea be followed up. John Booth also apologised for an error which had appeared in the Almanac giving the wrong starting times for the London Meetings. He asked that all Regional Branch Secretaries should notify him of their meetings as soon as possible, as much time is wasted trying to elicit this information.

W.R.Violon suggested a guide to the rarity of various makes of cylinder, which would make a suitable article for the magazine.

The Editor stated that his plea for articles had been very fruitful, but that more were always welcome. As Chairman, he asked for suggestions for alternative types of meeting and function to those being held by the Society at present.

The President thanked the Officers and Committee for their efforts over the past year, and the Chairman closed the meeting.

WHAT IS IT?

Mike Field

From time to time collectors acquire mystery items which cannot be readily identified and while the collective knowledge of the Society's members may be comprehensive, the problem is how to tap it. A typical example is the dual

purpose phonograph/gramophone of unknown origin exhibited at the recent Phonofair. Members are invited to submit a photograph (black and white) and a short description of the article, which, subject to the Editor's discretion, will be published in the Hillandale News. Hopefully that will provoke an authoritative answer which can be printed in a subsequent issue.

The item for identification in this issue is shown in the photograph. Obviously the case of an early gramophone made by the Deutsche Grammophon AG, the front bears the familiar trade mark with Nipper on a round black on gold transfer with the words "Deutsche Grammophon Aktien Gesellschaft. Patente in allen culturste. Trademark". Directly under the central motif, the words "Die Stimmeseines Herrn" (His Master's Voice) appear. On the opposite side of the case is another black on gold transfer bearing the word "Grammophon". The fixing holes and marks in the bottom of the case suggest very strongly that a dog model motor was used; the holes line up exactly with such a motor and there is a semi-circular recess hollowed out of the inside of the right hand side to accomodate the spring housing. However there is no original hole anywhere through which the dog model speed adjustment control could project. (There is a hole above the trade mark transfer but this has been crudely done in later years) The outline and screw holes of the position of a fixed arm providing the pivot for a wooden (?) arm supporting the horn and reproducer can be seen on the left hand side.

So it would appear to be the case of a German version of the famous dog model, but when was it made and what did it really look like? How was the speed adjusted and what sort of brake was used? What fitted in the 1/8 in recess at the top of the case; if metal did it provide an additional bearing for the turntable spindle or was there a clearance hole? Many other questions could be asked but space forbids. A photograph and description of the complete, original machine would be very welcome. Any offers?

CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH & GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY

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MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION RATES

U.K. and Europe: £5.00 per annum

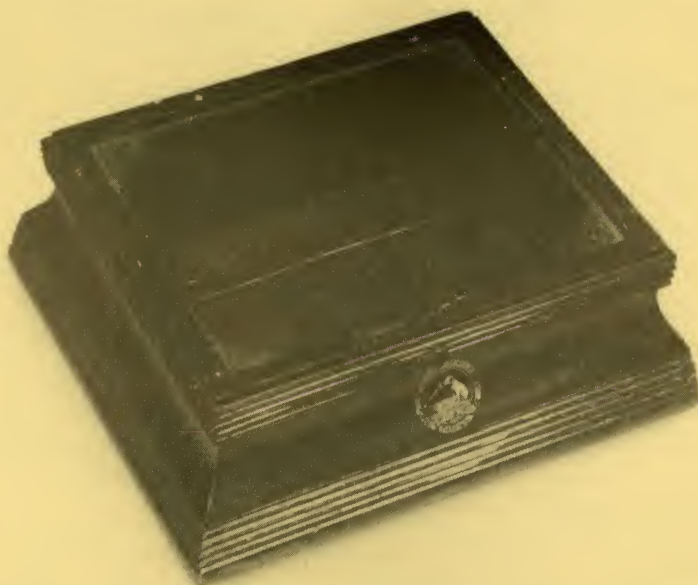
All other countries (Sterling subscriptions, for surface mail only): £5.00 per annum

All other countries (Sterling subscriptions, for Airmail): £7.50 per annum

U.S. Dollar subscription rates (including bank charges): \$15.00 Airmail / \$11.00 surface mail.

RIGHT: unusual (and unidentified) dual-purpose talking machine seen at the Phonofair at Cotton. The disc-playing part is largely a conjectural restoration, since no complete example could be found for copying. (A.J.George photo

BELOW: The mystery pre-tone-arm Gramophone case from the Deutsche Grammophon Aktiengesellschaft, described by Mike Field on Page 138. This may have been a locally (i.e. German) made version, or it could have come from Camden, N.J. - comments from Members in Germany or the U.S. would be especially welcome. It is doubtful if this style was ever offered by G.& T. in the U.K. - but you never know!





The only trouble, guv'nor, is getting the grooves to fall the right way up.